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EXISTING CONDITIONS IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

CYRUS LAURON HOOPER
Murray F. Tuley High School, Chicago

In the autumn of 1905 a few Chicago teachers, under the leadership of Mr. James F. Hoscic, of the Normal School, formed a social-professional club for the purpose of studying current problems of English teaching, and, if possible, of disseminating information regarding them. It became the ambition of the club to encourage the formation of similar organizations, and to be one of many clearing-houses of ideas on the subjects in hand. To these ends, committees on Reading and Literature, Grammar and Composition, Oral Expression, Libraries, Continuity, Current Literature, English in Other Places, Social Affairs, and Finance were appointed, meetings were begun, investigations were instituted, and reports were prepared.

Little, perhaps, has been done in the way of dissemination, one paper only, that of Miss Peet on "Libraries," having been published; but the reports and discussions were enlightening, notably those of outsiders, as Mr. Shuman, of the *Chicago Evening Post*, and Dr. McClintock, of the University of Chicago; and the investigations are being continued with the original ends in view.

From the first it has been the purpose of the Club to find out the existing conditions, and what is being done in the matter of English teaching, rather than what ought to be done. With this purpose in mind, the present writer, as chairman of the Committee on English in Other Places, undertook, with the aid of his associates, to find out what conditions prevail, and what is going on elsewhere than in Chicago. As the membership of the club consists of grade teachers, high-school teachers, normal-school teachers, principals, college professors, and any others who are interested in English teaching, the requests for suitable ques-

tions to be sent to other cities should have been numerous, and varied in character. There seemed to be a disposition, however, to let each committee work out its own problems; and the result is that there is a greater number of questions concerning high schools than grammar schools, for the list was prepared mainly by the chairman of the committee, who is a high-school teacher. Perhaps this preponderance may detract from the value of the report. Nevertheless, the result of the committee's inquiries is given below, in the hope that it may be of interest, possibly of profit.

About one hundred and sixty lists of questions were sent to the capitals of the states, to the principal cities, to the smaller cities of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Iowa, and also to a few normal schools. About seventy answers were received. The order of the report is: the question, a summary of answers, a few of the significant answers given verbatim, and finally brief comment. In some cases one or more of these details is omitted. That the totals under the summaries are not uniform is due to the facts that there were no responses to some questions, and that there were more than one to others.

GRAMMAR SCHOOLS

1. *Are the reading lessons in your schools devoted entirely to literary study, or is some time devoted (a) to memorizing, and (b) to biographical study?*

There were 52 affirmative answers to (a), and 49 to (b). There were 8 affirmative answers to both. A very few were evasive or incomplete. It was apparent that there was more memorizing in the lower grades, and more biographical study in the upper grades.

New Haven, Conn. "Literary study, biographical study, memorizing, and informational reading, i. e., history, geography."

Lansing, Mich. "We correlate English history and reading to some extent; biography of American authors, statesmen, and publicists provide basis for composition."

Syracuse, N. Y. "Only two or three of the grammar grades of this city are really awake on the modern ideas of teaching English. Most of the work is a meaningless grammar grind under the useless methods of Reed and Kellogg."

The question did not get to the bottom of the matter. The following should have been added: Does the work interest the pupils? If it does

not, then the *Dial's* occasional charge that we teach pupils to hate literature rather than to love it, would seem to be well founded.

2. *Do pupils dramatize any masterpieces?*

There were 17 affirmative and 30 negative answers. Eighteen correspondents said "sometimes," and their answers should therefore be counted in the affirmative.

3. *Do your teachers seem to be as well prepared to teach English as other subjects?*

To this question there were 28 affirmative answers; 27 negative; 4 doubtful; 3, "majority are." Several answers were uncertain or incomplete.

Buffalo, N. Y. "I think not. It seems impossible to obtain a great body of teachers who are themselves readers or who have any large appreciation of literature."

Richmond, Va. "The idea seems to be quite prevalent that there is less need of special preparation. As it is the vernacular and everybody talks, it seems to be assumed that the child can readily learn it—hence less special preparation."

Joliet, Ill. "Yes. People know better how to find fault with the study of English."

Toledo, O. "My observation has been that teachers who teach English well teach other subjects well."

Bloomington, Ind. "The idea seems to prevail that almost anyone can teach the subject."

Urbana, Ill., reports that the English work is the best they do.

Maryland (from the assistant state superintendent). "No. English of teachers and even of superintendents is often incredibly poor."

Olney, Ill. "Yes, better than some of the other subjects."

On the whole, opinions seem to be about evenly divided. The influence of colleges, normal schools, and of the public criticism of English teaching is undoubtedly working a change for the better.

4. *Have you any tangible evidence that your pupils read, out of school, as good literature as they read in school? Do they acquire a taste that requires indulgence?*

Affirmative answers, 21; negative, 23; doubtful, 16. As usual, there were a few answers that were difficult to classify.

Louisville, Ky. "Partial failure due to lack of books at home. Library board establishing branch libraries."

Cleveland, O. "Have good reason to believe that the outside reading is on a higher plane than ever before. Public libraries are our main outside witness."

Indianapolis, Ind. "Think outside reading on a lower plane. Nothing more than a natural tendency to ease."

Urbana, Ill. "No. School readers are purposely of a higher grade than current taste demands. But our pupils read a very creditable line."

Ann Arbor, Mich. "They read much—too much in many cases—outside of school; probably of not so good quality as that furnished at school but much better than it would be were it not for school influences."

Boise, Id. "Yes. Have pupils at end of vacation make out list of reading during vacation. Teachers suggest and select reading for pupils."

Crawfordsville, Ind. "Not quite so good literature as read in school, for the obvious reason that selections used in school are employed for the purpose of developing a higher taste than now possessed."

Opinions seem to be slightly in the negative. And it must be noted too that, since the schools heard from are doubtless above the average in merit, conditions are probably better in them than elsewhere. Nevertheless, the tendency is doubtless upward, owing to the increasing interest in school and public libraries. There is a manifest effort in many quarters to overcome the mental laziness that causes the reading of books that may be read without effort. If we had a little less of Buster Brown and his kind, conditions would be improved.

5. *In teaching composition, do you aim at accuracy of expression, or rather at the fulness and fluency that comes from much rather than from accurate writing?*

The answers were: accuracy, 10; fulness and fluency, 13; both, 16. Seventeen schools aim at fulness and fluency early in the course, and at accuracy later; 4 pursue the opposite course. One (San Francisco) aims at fulness and fluency in the first writing of a theme, and at accuracy in the second writing.

Mattoon, Ill. "We urge accuracy, but I do not feel that we hinder free expression by so doing."

Detroit, Mich. "Fulness and fluency receive the greater stress. For accuracy we depend upon what might be called the progressive elimination of error."

Ann Arbor, Mich. "Rather too much at accuracy, I fear; but we do not want to neglect that for overzealousness for fulness and fluency."

Bloomington, Ind. "About the only composition given here is oral expression." (From a high-school assistant.)

Buffalo, N. Y. "A decided change has taken place in the last few years. Formerly accuracy was the aim; now it is freedom of expression."

Nashville, Tenn. "In the grammar grades accuracy of form and expression is made a little more prominent; but of late my outline of composition for grades 4-8 has assigned subjects that encourage fluency because of greater interest." (From J. W. Sewell, one of the authors of the Baskerville and Sewell Grammar.)

There is an evident tendency toward the attainment of freedom of expression. The tendency would be a better one than it is, if the American people had any language consciousness and conscientiousness. When such

expressions as "an elegant time" and "a gorgeous time" are the only means some people have of expressing the superlative, time spent in securing a greater respect for adjectives, for example, is not wholly wasted.

6. *Do your reports from your high schools indicate that your pupils are able to use their knowledge of grammar in the study of other languages than English?*

There were 22 affirmative answers, 14 negative, and 24 admitted deficiency.

De Kalb, Ill. "Not on the basis of the high-school teachers who have been trained in Latin or German, and approach discussion from that standpoint. They expect too much."

Cincinnati, O. "No. Chiefly because the languages they study are inflected languages."

La Grange, Ill. "Yes. Our grammar work is our best work in English. Our high-school teachers commend it."

Urbana, Ill. "Not as they should. Grade pupils are not sufficiently drilled to make their knowledge definite and available."

St. Louis, Mo. "Yes, but they recognize the fact that English grammar is quite a different thing from the study of Latin."

Trenton, N. J. "Some of our best pupils can, but a large majority cannot use such knowledge."

Detroit, Mich. "Our teaching of English grammar is not for the purpose of furnishing a foundation for the Latin students."

Lansing, Mich. "Judging from the chance remarks of the Latin and German teachers, I should say that the training of pupils in English grammar was not of much assistance."

Syracuse, N. Y. "My observation is that knowledge of technical grammar is the least practical knowledge pupils have."

The great majority of the correspondents express more or less dissatisfaction with the existing conditions. The attempts to explain the reason seem to me, except in the case of one, to be wide of the mark. Two of these attempts, those of Detroit and St. Louis, are especially so; for it is not taken into consideration that teachers of Latin and German demand nothing from first-year high-school pupils except what they are supposed to have learned in the study of *English* grammar—knowledge of the parts of speech, subject and predicate, phrases and clauses. In these essentials, however, a great majority of pupils, if my observation has been accurate, are sadly deficient. Most of them have to learn these fundamentals again. Neither does the cause of the failure lie in the selection of a textbook, as some answers would lead us to think. To put the matter flippantly, it makes little difference what grammar is bought, so it is not used. The correspondent from Urbana, Ill., however, has precisely the right view of the matter—pupils are not sufficiently drilled. If, instead of dragging the

innocents through a textbook, the teachers should put some literary masterpiece into their hands—one that had been previously read for its literary value, say—and make the entire work the analysis of sentences in a simple way, there would be not only more knowledge of grammar in the abstract, but also better preparation for the study of other languages than English. Under the present method, grammar is all theory; under the other, it would be application, and the knowledge of it would cease to be the “least practical” the pupils have.

HIGH SCHOOLS

1. *Do you use the college entrance requirements in your high schools? If so, in what grades?*

Thirty-one schools reported that the college readings were used in 11 grades. All schools reported their use in some of the grades, the proportion seeming to increase as the pupils advance. In some schools there seemed to be no other process of selection, while in others many more than the required readings are used.

2. *Are you satisfied with these readings?*

Affirmative answers, 17; negative, 6; doubtful or indefinite, 23; exceptions mentioned, 4; with new requirements, 8; not unless supplemented, 3.

Wheeling, Va. “Abominable. What pupil cares for *Religio laici*?”

Joliet, Ill. “No, but we use others in the ninth and tenth grades. Old list narrow. New list more satisfactory.”

Cleveland, O. “Macaulay’s *Addison* and the *Sir Roger de Coverley* papers sometimes pall.”

Indianapolis, Ind. “If we are not satisfied with them, we do not read them.”

Buffalo, N. Y. “It is impossible to satisfy everybody.”

Wheaton, Ill. “Would like more American authors.”

Ann Arbor, Mich. “With those we use. Otherwise we substitute what we prefer.”

Nashville, Tenn., adds southern authors.

Jackson, Mich. “Of course not. Who is? Better pleased with the new list.”

Madison, Wis. “There is nothing faultless under the sun. *De gustibus non disputandum.*”

The total impression is that slavish adherence to the required readings will work harm, and that the new list is much better because it offers a wider range of choice. It is plain that the new list has prevented an outright rebellion. However, I feel sure that it would be almost universally admitted that the college requirements have been productive of much good, and that the old list and the new would be regarded as steps to a perfect list, which must embrace all good books that come within the range of the pupil’s potential appreciation.

4. *Were any of your readings adopted at the request of pupils, or because of your knowledge of their desires?*

To this question there were 17 affirmative and 27 negative answers. Eight schools reported that selections were "sometimes" made at the request of pupils, and this number must therefore be added to the 17, which makes the affirmative and negative answers about equal. One school (Quincy, Mass.) has dropped readings because pupils did not like them.

Cincinnati, O. "Not so much their desires as their needs."

Providence, R. I. "Class asked to read *Kenilworth* after reading *Ivanhoe*."

Cleveland, O. "We have added to the books prescribed because we think the course should be a little more inspiring."

Grand Rapids, Mich. "We do not hold to requirements slavishly, and have a system of individual readings by which special needs of pupils are conserved."

St. Paul, Minn. "Certainly not."

Nashville, Tenn. "We know pretty well what they would like, and we undertake to raise their taste so that they will like what they had not cared for before."

Detroit, Mich. "Largely through the desires of pupils as shown in their regular class-work. The needs of pupils when cultivated grow into desires for those things which are best." (NOTE.—The course in the Detroit schools seems to be more flexible than those elsewhere.)

Syracuse, N. Y. "Under the 'New Syllabus' the teachers are free to choose the literature. Classes often clamor for certain texts, particularly Shakespeare."

Atlanta, Ga. "Because of our knowledge. They are not old enough nor wise enough to choose for themselves."

The summary and the quotations offer sufficient proof that a short list of readings, whether it is imposed by the colleges or not, is not popular, and that secondary schools are reaching out for more liberty.

5. *What masterpieces do you study intensively, and what extensively?*

It is practically impossible to give a summary of answers to this question because of their diversity, and because there is probably no general understanding as to the precise meaning of "intensive" and "extensive." Too many schools, however, read the entrance requirements intensively, and, apparently, with little other inspiration than the prospect of a college examination at some time in the future. Thus the practical interests of a minority are considered of more importance than the development of literary taste in the great body of pupils.

New Haven, Conn. "After reading a masterpiece intensively, we follow it with an extensive reading similar in style and theme."

Cleveland, O. "We make no particular difference. We do not know how to make any decided distinction."

Mattoon, Ill., reads 17 authors, all intensively.

Lansing, Mich. "We really have three different degrees. Their supplementary reading is extensive, five or ten minutes being given to an individual report on a whole book, or else an entire class hour in case the entire class has been reading the same book. There is much greater thoroughness in taking up *The Last of the Mohicans*, *Ivanhoe*, etc. *Sir Launfal*, Shakespeare's plays, Macaulay's *Essays*, Milton's *Minor Poems*, and some of Arnold and Browning, are studied intensively."

Freeport, Ill. "I cannot say that we study any masterpiece intensively or extensively. I might say that each masterpiece is begun in this way (the intensive), and as soon as we feel that the pupils have the idea, we change to the extensive method."

The answer of New Haven seems to be especially rational, and that of Freeport is certainly good.

6. *Do the pupils of the upper grades of your high schools read fewer books of the Alger, Henty, Optic, and Holmes (Mrs. Mary J.) type than those of the lower grades?*

To this question there were 37 affirmative answers, and no negative; 11 were "think so"; 4, "don't know"; 2, "hope so." Three correspondents said they thought none of these books were read.

Muncie, Ind. "We believe so." (It is to be observed that the high school in this city has a very long and elaborate course of readings, including Lily's *Euphues*. One wonders what the reaction is when the pupils escape from the teachers.)

Detroit, Mich. "Guidance of reading thorough. Pupils attain taste."

Grand Rapids, Mich. "Yes. The Public Library has section with one open shelf for books recommended and required for given grades. At one place mediaeval romances and plays, at another American novels, etc. We control the reading of pupils by methods explained under 14, and by calling for reports every two or four weeks. A good part of the study of pupils is in the extensive reading. We also keep control of the notebook work on it, and make it the subject of occasional essays and tests." (Under 14: "We have recitations given of individual reading, in which pupils walk to the front and face the class, to tell a story, for example.")

My own observation in an extended experience is that the juvenile and the highly sentimental books are not read by third- and fourth-year pupils, especially by the latter. The boys discover for themselves that all the Alger books, for example, are alike; and they become weary of reading the same tale again and again. They discover, too, the constant exaggeration. So with the girls who have read many of Mrs. Holmes's books. At this period both sexes take to George Barr McCutcheon, Charles Major, and others of the red-light and slow-tremulous-music type, and soon repeat their former experience—that this style palls because of its sameness and its exaggera-

tion. Many boys and girls now acquire a taste for the more rational romances; and some, especially girls, learn to like the realistic type of fiction. Many of them have read much of Jane Austen before they reach the fourth year, and Mr. Howells is a favorite.

Undoubtedly, much of this change is due merely to the advance of maturity; the course in English is to be given but a part of the credit, and teachers can make serious blunders by pushing pupils too rapidly into the heavier reading, as biography and essays, to both of which there is a strong antipathy in the minds of most young people. They can, however, be induced to read the heavier books if their interest is aroused beforehand, and if they have perfect liberty to return a book unread in case, after a fair trial, they find it uninteresting.

7. *Do you devote any time to the history of the English language?*

To this question there were 30 affirmative answers, and 11 negative; 8 correspondents said "some or little;" 1, "yes, in history department;" 13, "incidentally." The great majority, then, give some attention to this important matter.

8. *Do you study the history of English literature? American?*

The answers to the first question were almost unanimously in the affirmative, 55 having answered yes, 7 having said "indirectly" and "a little," and only 1 having said no. Twenty-six schools study the history of American literature, 3 do not, and 2 incidentally or a little. Many correspondents failed to answer this question.

Bloomington, Ill. "Yes, I think too much."

Madison, Wis. "Yes; authors are classified according to time, place, and thought. Not the graveyard type of history, however."

Grand Rapids, Mich. "Use Moody and Lovett as references, and read masterpieces chronologically."

The lurking fear that we are, or at least that we have been, making a mistake in teaching the history of literature, is plainly revealed in the first and the second of these quoted answers; and indeed the study can be made "deadly dull" and unprofitable, if the teacher regards its purpose the cultivation of memory rather than of judgment.

9. *Do you teach grammar? If so, with what purpose?*

There were 2 affirmative answers, 5 negative; and 7 replied, "incidentally." The other answers (which made two replies in one) were as follows: review in first year, 6; historical side, 1; sentence structure, 4; use in study of other languages, 5; technical knowledge, 5; analysis, 1; teaching correct English, 13; mental drill, 2; punctuation, 1; for its own sake, 1; preparation for teaching, 3; review at end of high-school course, 6. Two correspondents said that there was no formal grammar studied in their schools. One school has an elective review.

The highest number given here is 13, which registers the fact that many

teachers believe the study of grammar corrective of bad English, as it certainly is if it is intelligently taught. There is, I believe, much opinion to the contrary. At the same time, the training value of the study seems not to be lost sight of.

10. *In teaching composition, do you aim at accuracy of expression, or rather at the fulness and fluency that come from much rather than from accurate writing?*

The answers were: accuracy, 10; fulness and fluency, 10; both, 22; fulness and fluency and accuracy later, 12; accuracy first, and fulness and fluency later, 4.

Mattoon, Ill. "Accuracy above everything."

Rockford, Ill. "We aim at both, and get neither, except to a certain degree. We do not sacrifice quality to quantity."

Accuracy seems to be sought more in the high schools than in the grammar schools, and more in the upper grades of the high schools than in the lower. The condition is as it should be in this respect, but it must be admitted that the results as measured in the quality of written English in the schools, are far from satisfactory.

11. *Are most of your themes drawn from the personal experience of your pupils, or from their reading? Does the proportion change as the pupils progress? If so, which way?*

The answers were as follows: from personal experience, 8; from reading, 4; mostly personal experience, 5; mostly reading, 3; both, 26; evenly divided, 5; variable, 1; no intelligent plan, 1. Thirty-one schools have more themes from the reading of pupils as the classes advance, and fewer from personal experience; while only 4 pursue the contrary plan.

St. Louis, Mo. "Toward a larger use of subjects made possible by their increased information and strengthened insight."

Madison, Wis. "From both sources. The change is toward personal experience. Those from their reading are time exercises written in class—impromptu."

Maryland (from the assistant state superintendent). "Few teachers follow any intelligent plan. Most work is too formal, and there is entirely too little composition work."

The total impression is that in the earlier years more themes are taken from personal experience than from reading. This is as it should be, unless we are training pupils to be critics.

12. *Is composition correlated with other subjects?*

There were 33 affirmative answers, 3 negative, and 12 indefinite. Three correspondents answered "somewhat;" 2 that composition is correlated with "other English work."

Providence, R. I. "Only so far as other subjects provide theme-titles, and as tests in other subjects take the place of the usual compositions."

Joliet, Ill. "Not to such an extent as to destroy interest in composition."

Grand Rapids, Mich. "To a small extent, but we arrange for Homer at the same time that Greek history is studied, for Julius Caesar at the time Roman history is studied, and for mediaeval romance in the same way."

Wausaw, Wis. "Teach composition in whatever pupils write—all subjects."

In a large majority of the schools heard from, then, composition is correlated with other subjects; and as pupils are likely to get the idea that accuracy of expression is needful only in the English work, the condition seems to be good. It is necessary, however, to heed the warning implied in the answer of the Joliet correspondent.

13. *Do you find your first-year pupils deficient in any respect? If so, what? Have you traced the difficulty to its causes?*

There were but 3 negative answers to this question, and 10 to the effect that the pupils are as well prepared as can be expected. The others were as follows: indifference, 1; carelessness, 2 (no cause known); inability to get ideas from the printed page, 7; spelling, 7; spontaneity of expression, 3; English grammar, 13; power of concentration, 4; vocabulary, 6; illogical thinking, 1 (cause—haphazard reading); inability to use former acquisitions, 1; clearness of expression, 1; dictionary work, 1; fulness of expression, 2; penmanship, 1; written work, 3; reading, 1; punctuation, 1; interest, 1; letter forms, 1; imagination, 1; creative power, 1; sense of humor, 1; elementary ideas, 1. Besides these, there were a few answers of a general character, as "many respects," "usual difficulties," "not as a whole." The various causes were: foreign parentage, 3; lack of time for English in the grades, 1; immaturity, 5; lack of suitable text in grammar, 1; lack of practice (in writing), 1; home surroundings, 1; lack of uniform methods in the grammar schools, 1.

Richmond, Va. "The most serious difficulty is the inability to gather thought from the printed page."

Atlanta, Ga. "Too many things done for them, and too many subjects attempted by them. Too much effort to secure individual results. The rudiments are essential to all children. Attempts to find the 'particular taste' of a very young child is a waste of time."

St. Louis, Mo. "They have the natural defects of the stage of advancement."

Olney, Ill. "Yes. Many of them have not been trained to be responsible for anything."

Nashville, Tenn. "Deficient in accurate analysis of the sentence; in fulness of expression in the recitation; in ability to study without the frequent assistance of the teacher; in ability to use the dictionary skilfully, etc."

Philadelphia, Pa. (after admitting deficiency). "This will always be the case, as all pupils cannot be equally proficient in all branches."

Bloomington, Ill. "We have the same complaint to make of the pupils coming to us that the teacher of the grades has when a new grade is promoted to her room. We forget that there is a year's difference in the preparation of the pupils just received when compared with the pupils promoted to second year."

Buffalo, N. Y. (after admitting deficiency). "This is due to immaturity of mind, and cannot be wholly overcome."

Cleveland, O. "Pupils of the first year do not usually have very much idea of unity. They find it easy to wander constantly from the main point."

Rockford, Ill. "No. The pupils are all right."

New Haven, Conn. "Our first-year pupils have the faults peculiar to their age. Time alone will give them drill and experience needed."

Cincinnati, O. "Not any more than might be expected from children. We teachers forget that they are children of but thirteen or fourteen years of age, with immature minds and narrow horizons."

Cairo, Ill. "General inability to concentrate energies upon a thing long enough to master it. Too many are irresponsible—can't or won't do a thing for themselves. Will follow a plan, but can't originate even the simplest. Any written work to be handed in is usually well done, but otherwise preparation of work is neglected."

Bay City, Mich. "Lacking in knowledge of simple, practical English grammar—parts of speech, kinds of clauses, subject and object, etc. Partly due to hearing incorrect English at home, doubtless. One teacher says it is because too much grammar work is attempted in the grades, and too early."

The greatest deficiency seems to be in grammar, and the next in spelling and in ability to get the thought from the printed page. My own observation leads me to the same conclusion, and I have no doubt that the condition is general.

As to the causes: Comment has already been made on deficiencies in grammar. Professor Brander Matthews and President Roosevelt could doubtless throw light into dark places so far as spelling is concerned. The third cause, however, is a more difficult matter. A reading of the quoted answers will reveal a disposition to regard most deficiencies as the result of immaturity and unequal ability in the pupils; and, if so, to what correctives can we have recourse? There is much, however, in the complaint that too much is done for pupils in the grammar schools. On reaching high school and being given the task of learning a lesson from a book, they are often helpless. A change of method in the grades might produce a perceptible difference in a short time.

14. *Do you have exercises in oral expression? If so, what?*

Seven correspondents answered yes, and 3 no. The other answers were as follows: reading, 9; oratory, 4; elocution, 3; oral composition, 18; narra-

tion of things read, 11; accurate answers in recitation, 12; declamations, 5; telling stories, 6; debates, 12; literary societies, 2; in translations, 1; general discussions, 2; reports, 2; follow Scott and Denny, 1.

Detroit, Mich. "Oral expression covers a varied field."

Madison, Wis. "A teacher of elocution, and assignments to pupils to make close study of some selection and to present it orally in class in all its various phases; its author, theme, informing idea, style, diction, etc., with perhaps a few brief quotations."

Joliet, Ill. "Four years course in public speaking."

Louisville, Ky. "Elocution. Scenes from Goldsmith and Shakespeare. Work valuable."

15. *Is English taught by specially prepared teachers?*

There were 48 affirmative answers, 5 negative, and 11 replied, "generally" or "sometimes."

Ottumwa, Iowa. "Have three teachers out of twelve who teach only English."

The condition is satisfactory, and the credit plainly belongs to the colleges and the normal schools.

GENERAL

1. *Have you a club or a society that makes a study of English work?*

There were 6 affirmative and 49 negative answers. Doubtless there are many conferences of English teachers that might be called clubs. There seems to be none, however, whose purpose and whose latitude in the selection of members are precisely the same as those of the Chicago English Club. This organization has not yet proved its usefulness, but it will consider that it has done something worth while when another body of people interested in English work follows its lead.

2. *Have you any arrangement with your public libraries by which your pupils may be supplied with books at your request?*

To this question there were 56 affirmative and 6 negative answers.

Buffalo, N. Y. "Probably the most effective in the country. Each room is supplied with a traveling library, which is changed twice a year."

Grand Rapids, Mich. "... a scheme to lend 200 books in a case. Probably will not be successful, since teacher is responsible for books."

Ann Arbor, Mich. "City library is in the high-school building."

Jackson, Mich. "The library purchases books suggested by the faculty (almost any number of copies of the same book), and sends them to the school for the pupils to use. The high school is like a branch library."

Nashville, Tenn. "The Carnegie Library of Nashville supplies books to all grammar-school grades. . . . They are sent out twice each half-year, circulating from school to school, according to a regular schedule. These are read as supplementary readers, alternating with the regular readers."

Albany, N. Y. (From the city superintendent.) "Yes, I am fortunately chairman of the library committee of two public libraries."

Lansing, Mich. "Many copies of the same book in public library. In case of need in class, pupils are sent to get books. Have also grade libraries which travel from school to school."

Madison, Wis. "Teachers may request that certain books be reserved and placed on certain shelves for special use of pupils."

La Porte, Ind. "City library operated by school board."

Detroit, Mich. "Teachers' library in school. Many supplementary reading-books. Distribution from public library."

Philadelphia, Pa. "Students use the various libraries under the free library system, and special attention is given to young people's books at all branch libraries. Older pupils read real literature, as do adults. There are reading-rooms in all the libraries for them."

3. *Has each of your schools a library? How are the books supplied?*

Six correspondents replied simply in the affirmative; 2, in the negative; 4, that the libraries were small and unsatisfactory; 2, that there was a library in the high school only. In 26 cities the books are supplied by the board of education, in 6 by entertainments, in 7 by special funds, in 2 by pupils, in 1 by donation and purchase. In 2 cities there are only reference books in the schools.

Bay City, Mich., has 1,300 books in the high-school library; Jackson, Mich., 3,400; Atlanta, Ga. (Girls' High School), almost 7,000; Joliet, Ill., 2,200 (with an annual appropriation of \$300); Rockford, Ill., 2,394 (and much smaller libraries in each of 19 grade schools); Aurora, Ill., 2,000 (and each grammar school 1,200; annual appropriation, \$600); St. Paul, Minn., has fund known as the "State Award Fund," which yields to each high school \$1,500 annually.

Truly America is the country of opportunity.

If it were possible, from the data in the foregoing report, to say which one of the states is most thoroughly alive on the question of English teaching, I should say without hesitation that it is Michigan.